



# A Problem Deer to my Heart



deer

girlfriend

62 2 4

## Chapter 1 by SaintSayaka

She sits four inches from your face, close enough for her ridiculously lopsided beanie to brush your nose. Something about this feel entirely wrong. She is sentient. And she is pretty humanlike in every other way that isn't, well, not. Your college /did/ place the two of you in the same dorm...

Can you possible make a deer your girlfriend?

## Chapter 2 by Windlion



I suppose I'd better clarify. Felicia shares a suite with me and six other students, so more suitemate than roommate?

Three doubles, two singles, a storeroom that sometimes gets used as a third single when there are more students than rooms available, a shared kitchenette and bath. It's part of the university keeping up with the times, going non binary to meet student preferences.

One of the doubles has an engaged couple, Jeremy and Cee. I like and respect them a lot! Cee is a happy trans, which is okay, but pch is also a star geek like me yay! We are already plotting to drag everyone out to a hill out of Leonid meteors in November, heh heh.

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They are both grads, almost as old as our professors and still living an amazing life. I want to be like them some day.

Double two: juniors, “just friends” they say, though it seems like Lisa is more possessive than Cathy about that. Hanging with them can be a little edgy, especially with Lisa. I don’t know, I woke up to non binary relationships when the university gave us a half day long required “let’s all be respectful” seminar during our welcome week.

Who knew? I don’t even have a grip on girl-boy relationships, so I’m just smiling, respecting, and watching to see what works.

Double three: Artur and Leo are bronze gods, big on body building and serious clothes. Yeah, they are into each other, but also into showing off for other guys and gals. Not sure how tight their relationship is, either.

Two singles, both undergrads who have personal privacy concerns and are willing to pay the extra hundred. Felicia, sophomore. Andy, noob frosh, straight out of small town Kansas. That’s me.

So far, we haven’t socialized more than meeting in the kitchenette and sharing stovetop space. Yesterday I sucked up my courage and tried to start a conversation with Felicia. Maybe it went well, maybe not ... when I asked her if she always wore the fox costume, though she just snapped at me.

“I’m comfortable in this skin, okay? It’s not easy for me to be around people.” Then she stalked away.

Uh. Add furies to another niche of the relationship spectrum, I guess. Not easy to navigate for someone who, well ... is still looking for a first partner, you know? Embarrassing.

### Chapter 3 by Windlion



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A tap on the door. “Uh, yeah, door’s open.”

“Andy?”

“Felicia? Come on in, I’m just studying.” Anyone else, I would have told I was trying to sleep.

She slipped in the doorway, but kept one foot on the doorsill. *Scared? Of me?*

I thought about it. *Okay, I guess some guys might misunderstand.*

“Uh. How’s life going for you? I, I liked how the veggie thing you made for dinner smelled.”

“The - oh! You did?” Her eyes lit up. “Should, should I offer you a, a taste next time?”

“Yeah, sure, I’d like that. Uh. Is that a quilt?” I pointed to the bundle in her hands.

For a moment, I thought she was going to leap back out the door ... but there was another shout from the sports fans, and she turned back to me.

“I have a big favor to ask and you don’t have to say yes and please don’t think it means anything but I really, really, really need to get some rest and those loud noises freak me so ... so I was hoping that you would let me wrap up in my quilt and sleep over here? In your room? Alone? In the corner? Please?”

Scared. Like a deer. Got it. “Sure, Felicia. Not a problem, any time. Uh. If you want, you can have the bed. Uh. Alone. I’ve got a sleeping bag and a pad I can use.”

“No! Oh. No, no thank you. You’re very kind. And quiet. I, I like that.”

I rearranged some furniture over her protests, dug out my as-yet unused pajamas and wandered over to the bathroom to change. When I came back, she was curled up in the corner, hidden underneath her quilt.

*She came back the next night. And the night after. Deer do that, it seems, when they find a place that feels safe.*

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